

From: Joseph Blough
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 12/14/01 12:46pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

Please reconsider this settlement in the Microsoft (MS) antitrust case. The settlement

(<http://www.microsoft.com/presspass/trial/nov01/11-02settlement.asp>) in no way prohibits MS from using predatory practices against competitors or consumers since there are huge loop holes that MS can (and will) use. A good analysis of one such hole can be found here http://linuxtoday.com/news_story.php3?ltsn=2001-11-06-005-20-OP-MS.

The Christain Science Monitor went so far as to call Windows XP a "tourist trap" where they suck you into using nothing but their software with their proprietary file formats. This is surely not the behavior of a company that plans to make amends and compete fairly with its competitors.

As a linux user, I have seen how many options a user can have as far as computer operating systems (OS), software, and file formats. Microsoft seeks to remove these options through OEM agreements/arm-twisting hidden behind a "trade secrets" tag. The internet is a OS non-specific and browser non-specific medium, but MS is even taking that away. Windows XP heavily pushes you toward MSN in an attempt to overtake their latest competitor AOL. Personally, I use a local Internet Service Provider (ISP), but soon I'm sure MS will make it unprofitable to be a small time local ISP.

Consider this recession and how so many smaller computer software companies have had to close their doors. The main reason that many of these software companies remain small is that most of the money in the computing industry ends up in Redmond. Other companies only hope is to be bought by MS. MS monopoly eats into the revenue of practically every aspect of the computing industry (OS, ISP, office productivity, hardware, and now even console video games). These smaller companies can grow and hire more employees if only they have the assurance that MS is not able to use it's monopoly to destroy the smaller company.

Please, in the interests of protecting the consumer, do NOT accept that settlement. It will lead to unprecedented abuses by MS resulting in the loss of choices for many computer users. Many users do not even realize that they have a choice thanks to MS's past (and ongoing) strategies.

Thank you for your time.